

**General Assembly**

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**Financing of the United Nations Mission for the
Referendum in Western Sahara****Financing of the United Nations Mission for the
Referendum in Western Sahara****Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and
Budgetary Questions****Addendum**

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the reports of the Secretary-General on the financial performance of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) for the period from 1 July 1998 to 30 June 1999 (A/54/780) and on the proposed budget for the 12-month period from 1 July 2000 to 30 June 2001 (A/54/785). During its consideration of the reports, the Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarifications.

2. MINURSO was established by the Security Council in its resolution 690 (1991) of 29 April 1991 for an initial period of six months. Since then, its mandate has been extended by the Security Council in various resolutions, the latest being resolution 1292 (2000) of 29 February 2000, by which the Council further extended the mandate of the Mission until 31 May 2000.

**Financial performance report for the period from 1 July 1998 to
30 June 1999**

3. In its resolutions 52/228 B of 26 June 1998 and 53/18 A of 2 November 1998, the General Assembly appropriated an amount of \$60 million gross (\$55,918,800 net) for the maintenance of MINURSO for the period from 1 July 1998 to 30 June 1999. Of that appropriation, \$46,031,077 gross (\$43,001,827 net) has been assessed on Member States. Expenditures for the period totalled \$44,607,700 gross (\$42,398,200 net), resulting in an unutilized balance of appropriation of \$15,392,300 gross (\$13,520,600 net), or 26 per cent of the total appropriation, and an unutilized balance of assessments of \$1,423,377 gross (\$603,627 net). The



unutilized balances resulted mainly from the suspension of the process of identification of eligible voters in the referendum for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara between August 1998 and June 1999 pending the outcome of United Nations consultations with the parties to resolve difficulties in identifying applicants from certain tribal groupings.

4. As indicated in section II of the report of the Secretary-General (A/54/780), the suspension of the identification process has resulted in unutilized balances under all main categories of expenditure which have been sufficient to offset additional requirements arising from the delayed deployment of a military demining unit that had been provided for in the Mission's 1997/98 budget, the early repatriation of the engineering support unit and the hire of an additional fixed-wing aircraft during the peak period of activity in July and August 1998.

5. With regard to military personnel, an unutilized balance of \$2,941,300 resulted from repatriation of the engineering unit, which was carried out because of the uncertainty as to the resumption of identification activities. Pending the conclusion of political consultations and the resolution of the impasse, civilian police whose tours of duty had ended and Identification Commission personnel whose contracts expired on 31 December 1998 were not replaced, resulting in a significantly higher than anticipated vacancy rates for civilian police and international civilian personnel (38 and 29 per cent respectively) and an unutilized balance of \$7,633,500 under civilian personnel costs. The suspension of identification activities also accounted for a reduction of \$2,822,000 in operational requirements, which included the early termination of a hire contract for one MI-8 helicopter and the utilization of fewer flight hours than originally budgeted, as well as the non-utilization of funds for hotel accommodations for Identification Commission staff.

6. The Advisory Committee was informed that troop cost reimbursement from 1 September 1991 to 30 April 1999 totalled \$5.7 million, while the amount owed for the period from 1 May 1999 to 29 February 2000 was \$229,472. With regard to contingent-owned equipment, the Committee was informed that the amount owed as at 29 February 2000 was \$5.1 million and that there had been no reimbursement to troop-contributing countries as at that date. Unliquidated obligations in respect of contingent-owned equipment as at 29 February 2000 amounted to \$6.0 million. Under death and disability compensation, the Committee was informed that \$317,560 had been paid as at 29 February 2000 for 12 claims, leaving a balance of \$562,136 in unliquidated obligations and one pending claim. The Committee was informed that the cash position of MINURSO as at 29 February 2000 was \$7.7 million, unliquidated obligations for the period from 1 July 1998 to 30 June 1999 amounted to \$3.2 million and current loans totalled \$20.6 million.

7. The Advisory Committee was also informed that the total amount assessed on Member States for MINURSO for the period from 29 April 1991 to 29 February 2000 was \$391.4 million, against which the payments received amounted to \$322.2 million, leaving an outstanding balance of \$69.2 million.

8. The actions to be taken by the General Assembly in connection with the financing of MINURSO for the period from 1 July 1998 to 30 June 1999 are indicated in paragraph 17 of the performance report (A/54/780). **In view of the unforeseen changes in the implementation of the mandate of the Mission, the Advisory Committee recommends reduction of the appropriation provided in General Assembly resolutions 52/228 B and 53/18 A for the period from 1 July**

1998 to 30 June 1999 from \$60 million gross (\$55,918,800 net) to \$46,031,077 gross (\$43,001,827 net) corresponding to the amount actually assessed on Member States. The Committee also recommends that the unutilized balance of \$1,423,377 gross (\$603,627 net), based on the reduced appropriation recommended above, be credited to Member States in a manner to be decided by the General Assembly.

Information on performance for the current period

9. The Advisory Committee was informed that, against the authorized staffing establishment of MINURSO for the period from 1 July 1999 to 30 June 2000 of 27 military contingents, 203 military observers, 81 civilian police, 328 international staff, 113 local staff and 10 observers from the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the posts encumbered as at 29 February 2000 were 27 military contingents, 200 military observers, 80 civilian police, 290 international staff, 109 local staff and 8 OAU observers.

10. The Advisory Committee was provided with expenditure data for the period from 1 July 1999 to 30 June 2000 as at 29 February 2000. Expenditure for the period amounted to \$30,129,400 against an apportionment of \$51,752,400.

Cost estimates for the period from 1 July 2000 to 30 June 2001

11. As indicated in paragraph 1 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/54/785), an amount of \$46,611,600 gross (\$42,772,800 net) has been requested for the maintenance of MINURSO for the 12-month period from 1 July 2000 to 30 June 2001. This request represents a 5 per cent decrease (\$2,411,400) in gross terms in relation to the apportionment for the current period ending 30 June 2000. The proposed budget reflects decreases of \$167,600, or 2 per cent, in military personnel costs; \$916,500, or 4 per cent, in civilian personnel costs; \$1,232,500, or 11 per cent, in operational requirements; and \$112,800, or 3 per cent, in staff assessment, offset by an increase of \$18,000, or 100 per cent, in other programmes.

12. The Advisory Committee takes note of the intractable problems faced by MINURSO in the implementation of the settlement plan (see paras. 32-37 of the report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council dated 17 February 2000 (S/2000/131)). Implementation of the plan has been impeded by fundamental differences between the parties over the interpretation of the main provisions of the plan, most notably the issue of the establishment of the electorate. The Committee takes note of the statement by the Secretary-General in paragraph 33 of his report to the Security Council that "the two parties seem to share the belief that the composition of the electoral body will predetermine the outcome of the referendum". Therefore, over the period of almost nine years since the establishment of MINURSO, one or the other party has at different times withheld cooperation with the process of identification of eligible voters. The same underlying problems are likely to pervade the appeals process.

13. The Advisory Committee was informed that, as of 25 February 2000, a total of 86,411 applicants out of some 200,000 had been found eligible to vote in the referendum. In accordance with MINURSO appeals procedures, all those excluded from the provisional voter list have the right to appeal, while those found eligible can also challenge the inclusion of others. The Committee was informed that, as at

25 February 2000, almost 52,000 appeals had been received in connection with second part of the voter list. Together with the 79,000 appeals received from the first part of the voter list, this brings the total number of appeals received to over 130,000. The Committee was informed that, given this large number, the appeals process would likely be protracted, and, furthermore, that it was likely to be even more complicated than the identification process, especially given the fact that many applicants have indicated that they would provide witnesses to support their appeals. In addition, several other issues remain to be settled, such as the establishment of a protocol for the repatriation of Saharan refugees acceptable to all parties concerned and agreement on what would constitute appropriate security conditions for voting in the Territory. The Secretary-General has stated his intention to request his Personal Envoy to consult with the parties to explore ways and means to achieve an early, durable and agreed resolution to their dispute that would define their respective rights and obligations in Western Sahara. The Committee was informed that the Secretary-General would report to the Security Council towards the end of May 2000 on the results of those consultations.

14. The proposed budget reflects an increase in the international staffing establishment by 20 posts (12 posts at the P-4 level for additional Identification Commission members, 4 posts at the P-3 level for registration officers and 4 Field Service posts (one electronic data-processing assistant, one administrative assistant and two air support/movement control assistants)). An additional 18 local-level posts are also requested to support the activities of the Identification Commission. As indicated in paragraph 18 of the proposed budget, the additional posts are required to support and accelerate data processing with respect to activities at the 13 appeals centres. This would increase international staffing from 280 for the current period to 300 for the period from 1 July 2000 to 30 June 2001, and local staffing from 95 for the current period to 113 for the period from 1 July 2000 to 30 June 2001. In this connection, the Committee recalls its letter dated 6 October 1999, in which it concurred in the increase in staffing by 48 international and 18 local-level posts in connection with the operation of identification and appeals centres, and notes that the staffing requested for the period from 1 July 2000 to 30 June 2001 actually represents a decrease in staffing from the levels approved in October.

15. The Advisory Committee notes, as indicated in paragraph 8 of annex I.C of the proposed budget, that, based on the recent actual incumbency situation in MINURSO, the estimated international and local staff costs for the period from 1 July 2000 to 30 June 2001 reflect the application of vacancy factors of 35 per cent for Professional staff, 10 per cent for General Service and Field Service staff and 5 per cent for local staff. Incumbency for the current period, as indicated to the Committee, is mentioned in paragraph 9 above.

16. The actions to be taken by the General Assembly in connection with the financing of MINURSO for the period from 1 July 2000 to 30 June 2001 are set out in paragraph 3 of the proposed budget (A/54/785). **The Advisory Committee recommends that the amount of \$46,611,600 gross (\$42,772,800 net) be approved for the maintenance of MINURSO for the 12-month period beginning 1 July 2000, and that that amount be assessed at a monthly rate of \$3,884,300 gross (\$3,564,400 net) should the Security Council decide to extend the mandate of MINURSO beyond 31 May 2000.**